

*The ancient Believers Transition from Mortality to Life.*

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S E R M O N

Occasioned by the DECEASE of  
Mrs. HANNAH MUNN,  
Late of WATFORD, HERTS,

Who departed this Life, OCTOBER 1, 1779,

In the Eighty-fourth Year of her Age.

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By BENJAMIN WALLIN, A. M.

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<sup>A</sup>  
S E R M O N, &c.

JOB v. 26.

*Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age,  
like as a shock of corn cometh in, in his  
season.*

**H**APPY are they who die in the Lord ;  
young or old : when this earthly house  
of their tabernacle is dissolved, or rather  
immediately on their demise, the separate spirit  
\* ascends to those of the just made perfect, into the  
bosom of a reconciled God ; to be with Christ and  
behold his glory. Our text, therefore, in a sense  
and

\* It is remarkable, that the word rendered, *cometh in*,  
is very different from that we render *come*, in the sentence  
preceding ; which sometimes signifies to *retire* or *go to rest*,  
used in Joshua x. 13. for the suns going down : thus man,  
on his decease, goeth down to the grave, his body de-



and degree, may be applied to every faint on his departure to the unseen and eternal world : but the manifest design of the passage, is to express the transition of an aged believer from this mortal state to the mansions of bliss. They are the words of Eliphaz, the Temanite, which, though misapplied on false principles, convey a beautiful and striking idea of the ancient Christian, on his exit from the body ; the contemplation of which, through the agency of the Divine Comforter, may refresh those who mourn their own loss, in the decease of a venerable Matron ; whose standing and character in the world, and in the church, are well known to some in this assembly.

In this sacred verse, three things merit our attention : The character of the subject, how he comes to the grave, and the comparison by which his decease is illustrated ? After a discussion of these, I shall mention some instances in which the similitude holds, and then point out the honor and advantage of being sustained, by the

ascending to its bed in the earth ; whereas this last expression is the same used for a burnt-offering, which ascended by fire and smoke from the altar, Gen. xxii. 2. which agrees with the ascension of the soul to God, implied in the text, and also with the margin in our copies.

Providence



Providence and Grace of God, so as to depart in the manner represented.

I. For the subject we must advert to the beginning of Eliphaz's speech, recorded in the preceding chapter, the intention of which, for want of better understanding, was to convince Job, or rather to induce that holy man to a confession of his supposed insincerity, seeing he was now, in appearance, on the point of being removed out of life, long before he attained to the fulness of days here referred to, which Eliphaz seems to apprehend to be a certain indication of his want of religious integrity; under this prejudice he spares not the most uncharitable censure on his fainting in a day of adversity, ver. 5, 6. and then immediately adds, "Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?" So then the object in view is the righteous and innocent man; but, where shall we find a person of these moral characters in our apostate and rebellious world! Mankind, since the fall, are guilty and polluted from the birth, being shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin; for, "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one," Job xiv. 4. Who then is righteous or innocent, in a strict legal sense? Had the Almighty opened his eyes upon the very youngest of  
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the human race, now rejoicing in his presence, so as to bring him into judgment with him, he would certainly have condemned him. The high conceits of apostate man's innocence and virtue, considered in himself, are no less flattering than haughtiness; we are truly denominated transgressors from the womb: nor even is there a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not, Eccles. vii. 20. who then can stand up and say, I am righteous, and merit the favor of my offended Sovereign and Master? Every sensible man lies penitent at the throne of grace, crying as David, "Remember not, O Lord, the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions," Psal. xxv. 7. and again, "for thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great," ver. 11. Nor can any works of the sinner, however renewed by grace, in this imperfect state, have the least justifying virtue in them. If a just man is overtaken, and, through the subtilty of the flesh, enticed in an hour of temptation to do evil ("and let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," 1 Cor. x. 12.) it shall be to his cost; but when he doeth good, what avails it towards his clearance from sin? In this respect he is an unprofitable servant, he hath at most done his duty, nor legally *that*, for, as already hinted, his best action, if laid in the balance of justice, is light and deficient; of such importance is it to be found  
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in Christ by faith, in that righteousness which the Lord imputeth without works, when he justifieth the ungodly.

The terms innocent and righteous, in respect of the human race, in its present state, must be taken in a qualified sense; sometimes they relate to a particular action or design; as the mariners, Jonah i. 14, when, with reluctance, they cast the prophet into the raging sea, their consciences acquit them from any malicious intention, and accordingly they plead; "O Lord, lay not upon us innocent blood?" A wicked man may be falsely charged, and in that respect innocent. But for the most part these expressions refer to the general spirit and conduct of persons, and signify the same with being upright and harmless; the innocent are those who deprecate evil, whose consciences acquit them of known or allowed deceit in their profession or behaviour, towards God or man: they answer to the description of the pardoned sinner; "in whose *spirit* there is no guile," Psal. xxxii. 2. which agrees with our Lord's account of Nathaniel, John i. 47. as an Israelite indeed. In this sense David resolves, Psal. xxvi. 6. "I will wash mine hands in innocency, so will I compass thine altar, O Lord!" i. e. as ver. 11. "I will walk in mine integrity:" and in the same sense, Asaph uses the expression,



expression, Psal. lxxiii. 11. A man may be conscious of ten thousand errors from which he stands in need of being cleansed, and yet be withheld from presumptuous sins, or being guilty of the great transgression. Now this innocence of integrity is essential to a gracious man, with the want of which Job is impeached by the enemy; when he moved God against him; and the same accusation is cruelly insinuated, in these pointed queries of Eliphaz, ch. iv. 6. "Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, and the uprightness of thy ways?" This uprightness or integrity, which belongs to the righteous, is no common thing, it is more sublime than mere *moral honesty*, which is occasionally found with the men of this world; it is what the apostle styles *godly sincerity*, and belongs to the new man who, after God, is created in true holiness; a genuine simplicity, unknown to the carnal mind, for "it is not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God," 2 Cor. i. 12. the faithful maintain an holy conversation. The real Christian answers to these characters, as he is the subject of internal purity; and also as made righteous by the imputation of that righteousness brought in by the Messiah, his surety, who became obedient to the death of the cross, Rom. iii. 22. ch. v. 19. Phil. ii. 8. for it is to be remembered, that neither internal holiness, nor its fruit, however abundant, or singularly

gularly great, hath any concern in the justification of the called, which comes alone through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; "but, whom he called, them he also justified," Rom. viii. 30. Thus we have ascertained the subject of our text; he is a man truly upright and holy, whose conscience, under a thousand infirmities, testifies his sincerity before the omniscient Jehovah; a person evangelically righteous, being sanctified in heart, and covered with the robe of salvation, which is of God by faith: in a word, he is a saint, in a sound gospel sense, which agrees with verse 1. "To which of the saints wilt thou turn?" Among these righteous and upright souls, we are persuaded, on the most credible evidence, the deceased we now mourn, is numbered at the throne above, and on that account rejoice in our sorrow. Let us now consider,

II. How this saint, or innocent and righteous man, shall come to his grave? The grave is the house appointed for all living, and the coming thereunto, sometimes seems to intend a decent or honorable burial; at least this is promised to Abraham, Thou shalt *be buried*, Genesis xv. 15. On the other hand, that shameful prince Jehoiakim, is threatened for his wickedness, with having his corpse drawn, and cast forth beyond the



gates of Jerusalem, Jeremiah xxii. 19. An ostentatious funeral pomp is certainly vain; nevertheless, there is a decency in carrying the remains of the deceased to their tomb with marks of distinction, according to their rank in civil or religious life; in so doing also, the attention of spectators may be awakened to consider, how transitory the honor and affluence of this world; which, by the blessing of God, may produce convictions, subservient to their spiritual and eternal advantage: but to come to the grave in this sense is not peculiar to the righteous, witness the wicked rich man in the parable, Luke xvi. 22. and it is complained that, in the desolations of Jerusalem, the dead bodies of the saints were "given to be meat to the fowls of the heaven, and their flesh to the beasts of the earth," Psalm lxxix. 2. see also Revelations xi. 8. Now if a decent burial is not to be esteemed, it would be no instance of cruelty, or contempt, when the servants of the Lord are thus vilely treated; but the body, which alone, properly speaking, is carried to the grave, is not the principal intention of the place, it regards the whole person, and, as may presently be seen, imports an illustration of something more noble and interesting than that of an honorable interment; and what, according to Eli-  
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phaz's reasoning, Job might have expected, had he answered to the characters specified.

The clause now before us seems expressive how it is with the righteous in his end, or in what state, and with what advantage he dies, and this is comprized in the following terms; "*in a full age.*" Not in a fulness of external prosperity; full of riches, temporal honor, children and friends: indeed, Abraham, David, and some few of the faithful, died in these pleasing circumstances, but this is rarely the lot of God's children; more frequently the men of this world are filled with the hid treasures of the earth, and leave the rest, or what remains unexpended on their lusts, to their babes, Psalm xvii. 14. It is not uncommon for those who are rich in faith to be in great poverty, insomuch that, especially in advanced life, they are dependent on others, nor is this any disgrace, if they have been active and upright in their station; besides these circumstances are distinctly mentioned in the preceding verses.

By *a full age*, some understand a full extent of the days determined to the saint, but there is nothing singular in this, it being universally the case with mankind; the righteous and the wicked,

from the infant to the oldest man living, no doubt, continue their appointed time ; much less is it to be taken for dying in full strength, or, as a \*respectable expositor renders it, " of a lusty age." Indeed, the eye of Moses was not dim, nor his natural force abated, at the age of one hundred and twenty ; but this is mentioned as an extraordinary case ; and the pious, for the most part, are no less feeble and wrinkled in the flesh than others, in the like advanced state. I apprehend that two things are included, agreeable to the scope of the place ; first, this report is verified when the days of a believer are extended to the utmost, or it may be far beyond, the ordinary limits of man's continuance on earth ; we learn from Psalm xc. 10. that in the time of Moses, the days of our years were three score years and ten ; and accordingly it is said, that " David died in a good old age, and full of days," 1 Chron. xxix. 8. Now it appears from the history of that chosen servant of the Lord, that he was no more than seventy when he departed this life, 2 Sam. v. 4. nevertheless, in Jeremiah vi. 11. there seems a gradation from the aged to him that is full of days ; be that as it may, when the Christian's life is extended considerably beyond the usual limita-

\* Mr. Broughton. See Caryl on the Place.



tion, as in the instance of our dear deceased friend, he may truly be said to come to his grave in a full age, yet this alone will not be a criterion of the righteous, seeing the life of a sinner is sometimes no less extended; the wicked may live and become very old; nor is it unfrequent for persons of eminent piety to be cut off in the prime of their natural life; length of days in the subject is essential to the idea of the text, but something more is needful to complete the description in his favor: therefore, secondly, I apprehend it implies, and principally intends, a long life employed in the fear and service of God. The full age of the righteous is an age filled up with the obedience of faith, and the fruits of righteousness; not merely *old* age, but a *good old age*. The honor and happiness of a deceased person does not rest in his longevity; for the scripture awfully declares, that "the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed:" Isaiah lxx. 20. but the man who has obtained mercy to remember his Creator in the days of his youth, who has, from early life, trusted in the Lord, before the sons of men, adorning his profession by a walk becoming the gospel, and diligently followed every good work, in full assurance of hope, to the end of a long course in this world, may truly be said to come to his grave in a full age; such an one is capable of  
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the illustration in the text, as we may presently see. In these peculiar instances of divine mercy and love, the prophecy, in Psalm xcii. 14. is literally fulfilled, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree.——They shall bring forth fruit unto old age: they shall be fat and flourishing."—Blessed are they who thus "approve the things that are excellent, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God," Philippians i. 11. They shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness. This leads,

III. To the comparison by which the transition of the righteous in his death stands illustrated; and this is equally obvious and striking. "Like as a flock of corn cometh in, in his season." The children of God are frequently compared to wheat or good seed, in opposition to the wicked, who are represented under the metaphors of tares and chaff; but the point in hand is not so much the quality of the subject as the mode of his exit, or how the aged saint departs out of this life. Here is doubtless an allusion to the gathering of wheat in the natural harvest, the manner of which is well known, and exactly corresponds with the expression, *cometh in* or ascendeth, which we have already

already seen is the idea. Corn is not mowed or cut down as grass, with a scythe, but gathered with a sickle; it is, as it were, lifted up into the breast of the reaper; hence in Psalm cxxix. 7. we read of the husbandman binding sheaves in his bosom; some refer it to the setting or exalting the sheaves of corn in the field, and others to their being thrown upon the stack, or in the barn; but the former is sufficient, and seems more immediately intended; the allusion is elegant, and conveys several pertinent and useful ideas, concerning the death of those saints who depart in a full age, as already explained; which naturally brings us to the first article of improvement on the passage; namely, to mention some instances in which the similitude is just, when the righteous are removed in the circumstances described. And,

I. The comparison holds in respect of their *abundant meetness* for glory. The corn is not reaped till it comes to a certain maturity; there is a season for gathering it, Joel iii. 13. "Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe." And again, saith our Lord, John iv. 35. "The fields are white already for harvest;" this idea is imported in the text; a shock of corn cometh in, *in his season*. Indeed this is not peculiar to the aged believer; the spirit of every man who dies in faith  
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is made perfect, in order to be gathered into the heavenly state; no doubt, the youngest plant is ripe before it is removed to its place in the celestial paradise; nevertheless, this is one thing suggested in the description before us, concerning the ancient Christian on his departure, that he appears to himself, and to others, as it were ripe for the sickle; and the scope of the place is the apparent or manifest meetness of the subject. And, who cannot see a visible fitness in an old disciple, of large experience, whose heart is full of the word and love of God, and whose extended life, from his youth, has been employed in his service, to the glory of his name; I say, who cannot discern a remarkable fitness in such a saint, for being taken out of the body into the presence of his Lord?

Some on these words run a parallel between ripe corn and the ancient believer; such as bowing under the infirmities of age, in like manner as the stalk bends under the weight of the full ripe corn in the ear; also the likeness of his venerable head to the whiteness of the fields when the harvest is at hand; but his natural fitness for death is in common with others; the idea in our text is the spiritual meetness of the faithful for their change; being laden with the fruit of the spirit,



spirit, and having filled up their character in Christ, in a long course of service, it is decent "that they rest from their labors, that their works may follow them," Rev. xiv. 13. Again,

II. This description is verified in the *readiness* of the ancient and fruitful Christian, who is waiting for his admission to the world of spirits. There is not only an intrinsic meetness, but an habitual disposition in this saint for his remove. The fields appear white for harvest, according to the intention of our Lord, in the passage referred to before, when the people flocked on every occasion to hear the word, John iv. 35. also, when many fell under a conviction of their state, and were upon making the important enquiry; what must we do to be saved? And still further, when not a few were enlightened, and having trusted in Christ, freely present themselves to his appointments, and as it were press into the kingdom of God. Something like this is found in the aged believer, who lives in a kind of instant expectation of his absence from the body: persons newly and effectually awakened unto the obedience of faith, are not more ready to hear and to acknowledge the Lord in his ways, than faints, bending under the weight of numerous years, are for their being called up into his presence. It has been

justly remarked, that *coming in* denotes a willingness and desire, which agrees with that of a believer in these circumstances, to receive the recompence of a gracious reward: as ripe corn may be said, as it were, to invite the husbandman to thrust in the sickle; in like manner, he that has been long exercised in the warfare of faith, and laid by under bodily infirmities, in the near views of eternity, with the testimony of his conscience, and an earnest expectation of eternal life, is waiting and wishing to be united with those who are inheriting the promises: yea, it has sometimes been found, that the dying saint, in full assurance of hope, at the swellings of Jordan, has discovered a kind of holy impatience, in adopting the language of the church, as if he heard the voice of his Beloved, saying, "Surely, I come quickly;" replying, "Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus!" But again,

III. This representation is just, on account of the *beauty or comeliness* of these saints in their decease. Every thing is beautiful in its season; so is natural death, in the circumstances described. There is something truly amiable in the death of a person who has been enabled from the earliest days, to a very old age, to live a life of faith in the Son of God, in the sight of the world, adorn-  
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ing the doctrine of his Saviour, and who has, it may be, in his confinement, as it were, sealed his hope a thousand times over. What sight in nature more lovely than the fields of the earth, when white to harvest; every one smelling of a blessing from the Lord? In like manner the hoary head, in a way of righteousness, is a crown of glory, Prov. xvi. 31. It is so with the believer when the almond-tree flourishes, and when, upon the decay of this earthly tabernacle, the inward man is daily renewed: nor is it otherwise when reclining on his dying pillow; yea, and when expired, the breathless corps, however disagreeable to the natural senses, may occasion delight to the surviving, when they reflect on the high character, and happy state of the departed saint.

Thus a rising branch of the sorrowful family, who attended his venerable ancestor in her very last moments, with filial affection, observed, that "he never saw so pleasant a sight, contemplating the advantageous change the imprisoned spirit was making, without any seeming reluctance of soul or body."——May it be the happiness of every relation and friend, when finishing his course, on the same ground, to yield a like favor and pleasure to their mournful survivors!——This is true

honor!—What are the flattering inscriptions on the tombs of the wicked, however adorned, or elegantly expressed, compared with the lines of their faith and example, who have been epistles in Christ, holding forth the word of life, in legible characters to all? These monuments of mercy, being dead, yet speak: they speak the praises of him who called them out of darkness into his marvellous light. The perfume of their bed is not artificial and transitory, but real and eternal; for “the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.” And further,

IV. The comparison will approve itself on considering the *tranquillity* and *joy* that attends the venerable spirit in its passage, Psal. xxxvii. 37. “Mark the perfect, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.” There is peace *in*, and *after*, the end of the saint. The joy of harvest is proverbial: and sometimes a lively and triumphant faith in the article of death, produces that which is unspeakable and full of glory. The sorrows of natural death may overwhelm the spirit of a believer, in his last conflict: this may intercept and eclipse the light of his joy in God, who is the strength of his heart; but these clouds instantly disperse and vanish away in the divine presence; where mortality is swallowed up of life. Fix  
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an eye of faith on the departed soul with Christ; behold, it is in fulness of joy; and the days of mourning are ended! Nor is this confined to the subject; our Lord declares the repentance of a sinner on earth, excites joy among the angels in heaven: then, how must they tune their harps, when a vessel of mercy is made perfect, and, having finished its course, is placed in its mansion, at the throne of God and of the Lamb. Moreover,

V. As a shock of corn comes in, in his season, is safe from any future damage, the deceased faint is *taken from the evil to come*. It was a woe-ful, despairing lamentation, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!" Jer. viii. 20. Far be it that any present should be numbered with those who come short of the promise, and too late bewail their sad and irrevocable state! But this will, most surely, be the everlasting sorrow of those who neglect the salvation of God, till overtaken in their sins! Out-standing corn, when the season is over, is soon destroyed by the winds, rain, and storms, that ensue; not so the wheat which the husbandman binds in his bosom, and stacks, or lays up in his barn: in like manner the aged believer, when called up from the body, having long en-  
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dured, being as it were weather-beaten, or at least more or less exposed, in his warfare and pilgrimage, is at length safe housed from every impending tempest, or future temptation whatever. And finally,

VI. This comparison answers in respect of the *ascension of the soul at death to Jesus, and to the church triumphant in heaven.* It is written concerning Abraham, Gen. xxv. 8. that "he died in a good old age, an old man, full of years; and was gathered to his people." How gathered to his people? His dead body, indeed, was gathered to that of Sarah, his wife, long since entombed, verse 10. but certainly more is intended: was not his immortal spirit gathered unto the living in the celestial Jerusalem? Whence then the phrase of being "carried into Abraham's bosom?" Luke xvi. 22. "Thou shalt go to thy father's in peace," saith the Lord, Gen. xv. 15. *The fathers*, says an \*ancient expositor of our own, are the spirits of the just made perfect; unto whom the souls of the faithful ascend, when unclothed of this mortal frame, as those of the wicked descend to the spirits in prison, 1 Pet. iii. 19.

Thus the saint who departs in a full age answers to the description we have opened: he as-

\* See Ainsworth on Genesis xxv. 8. 17.



cends as a shock of corn cometh in, in his season; in respect of his maturity, and readiness for his change; the fitness and beauty of his remove; the peace and joy of his exit, and entrance into life; his security from any farther evil; and the ascension of his soul to the blessed in paradise. Would to God, whether longer or shorter our continuance here, we may number with these in our latter end! This, alas, is not the lot of mankind in general! No finally impenitent transgressor shall thus come to his grave: unless, my friend, thou art quickened by divine grace, from the death of sin, so as to live unto God, thy guilty spirit will go down into the regions of darkness and despair, never more to rise, but to shame and everlasting contempt!

On the other hand, as already hinted, the substance of the metaphor in the text may be applied to every one who dies in the Lord: he has a life hid with Christ in God: into whose bosom he is received on his departure, and, at the coming of his Redeemer, shall appear with him in glory. Nevertheless, there are peculiar advantages which result from being sustained to old age, in a life of faith, which I shall mention, and draw to a close. And,

I. In

I. In respect of an acquaintance with the things of the spirit, and establishment in the true grace of God, and, consequently, an actual readiness for the solemn and interesting event. Grace is of an increasing nature, and, for the most part, gradually advances, by experience, through divers temptations. The warfare prolonged, many are the believers conflicts with indwelling corruption, the wiles of Satan, and an evil world, through which he is passing; but these exercises, however sometimes very sharp and threatening, confirm the habits of grace: having overcome, in the strength of the Lord, and by the word of life, the suffering saint is more deeply rooted in the love of God, and abounding in the hope of glory to come. The ancient Christian, who has been many years exercised in the views of death and eternity, and, as it were, habitually framing his mind for his passage, having long frequently examined his state, reflected on the object of his faith, and, in the near prospect of the unseen and everlasting world, resigned soul and body into the hands of a covenant God, and "laid up in store for himself a good foundation against the time to come," 1 Tim. vi. 19. This man, I say, is not overtaken as by a thief in the night, or surprised unawares, which is the case in earlier life, when involved in the cares of  
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a busy and ensnaring situation, out of which the subject is sometimes suddenly removed. Again,

II. Such have more opportunity for glorifying God, according to their station and circumstances; which, may be esteemed an advantage. Men work while it is day. Indeed, in very old age, the Christian may be infirm, and incapable of many former services, but the righteous are fruitful in the most advanced state of natural life; and, for the most part, the longer the day, the more works of faith and labor of love are performed. Some seem to flatter themselves in a barren profession, but the man who can be indifferent about increasing in the fruits of righteousness, understands not the gospel, and has a very sorry pretence to an experience of its power, and the love of God in his heart, without which his religion is vain; and such would do well to look to themselves. Besides,

III. With this stands connected a growing evidence of vital union to Christ, the fountain of life, and having obtained like precious faith with God's elect. Saving faith is not alone; it will ever be justified by its works, James ii. 17. In proportion to this, there results a peculiar satisfaction to the dying saint himself, and also a benefit

to his surviving companions in the Lord, who are animated by his example to hold fast their confidence, in full assurance of hope, unto the end; which will certainly be found a real honor in the day of Christ. This leads,

IV. To the glorious recompence of reward, when the saint who answers to this description, shall reap a plentiful harvest, and find that truly his labor has not been in vain in the Lord. It has already been observed, that the uprightness and works of the believer has no concern in his acceptance at the tribunal of his judge. Far be it to insinuate, that any part, or the whole, of the longest and most active obedience of the Christian has any place in his justifying righteousness, or his acquittance from guilt at the divine bar. The believer is justified freely, and *alone*, by the surety-ship-righteousness of his Redeemer: and, indeed, admitting that he is interested in that glorious robe every thing of his own is virtually precluded by the infinite glory and perfection of that with which he is clothed; for that is complete in itself, nor can any addition be made to its intrinsic excellency and worth in the eye of the law, which is magnified thereby. On the other hand, the best works of the justified themselves, are destitute of legal perfection, and,



consequently, can have no justifying influence in the sight of a holy God. Nevertheless, there is not a good work of the saint, or any instance of evangelical obedience, that shall be unnoticed, or unrewarded in the day of revelation; then shall every righteous man have praise of God, 1 Cor. iv. 5. The good works of the faithful, unto which they are fore-ordained, and also created in Christ, will illustrate their real character, yea, and turn to a noble account, when the Lord crowns the gifts of his grace with that glory, which awaits all his saints at his coming. It is clear from \* 2 Pet. i. 11. and many like passages, that in proportion to the increase of virtue, knowledge,

\* The expression *πλουσίως*, or *abundant*, in the passage above, is very animating: it intimates that the Christian who adorns his profession shall not barely attain the celestial shore, as a shipwrecked mariner escapes with his life, but as a gallant ship boldly enters port, after a successful voyage, richly laden, with flying colours, guns firing, and the joyful shout of the crew, echoed by those who wait her arrival. In like manner, they who abound in the fruits of the spirit may expect to enter their everlasting mansion, as it were sailing into the blessed harbour, under a full gale of divine consolation and joy. Truly, this honor of the saints, is not of debt, but of grace: it originates from the good pleasure of the Father, and accordingly the recompence of reward, and the promise are the same, Heb. x. 35, 36. But it is the wisdom of God to set this prize of

ledge, and other branches of true godliness, is the evidence of being effectually called, and will be the honor and joy of an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Saviour; an expectation this, that would produce a more lovely appearance than is seen on the face of lukewarm and disorderly persons, under the name of Christianity.

Having taken a particular view of the text, as descriptive, more especially, of the aged believers transition from mortality to life, I might, with sobriety and truth, present the deceased as an example. Indeed, our departed friend was no advocate for speaking of the dead, except in extraordinary circumstances; but it seems decent, and I hope may be useful, to drop a few hints on the religious character of this ancient and honorable disciple, which may serve to shew, that there is at least a general likeness in her departure to the figure we have opened, to excite our perseverance in the same faith, and also to alleviate the sorrow, if not bind up the wounds, of her mourners.

This vessel of mercy was an early instance of sovereign grace in conversion: childhood and

his calling before the believer; for want of attending to which, some nominal Christians are slothful and barren, and, in the end, will be ashamed of their hope.

youth



youth are for the most part spent in dissipation and vanity; but it pleased God very soon to convince her of the state she was in, as a fallen creature, a transgressor of the law, and the subject of a sinful nature, under which she labored till enlightened into the knowledge of deliverance by the remission of sins; when, upon a full manifestation to her understanding and conscience, of the authority, all-sufficiency, and glory of Christ, who came into the world to save sinners, she was enabled to flee for refuge, and lay hold of the hope set before her. From that time she was remarkable for her delight in the truth of the gospel, which had been the power of God, through faith, unto the salvation of her soul.

It was the honor and happiness of the deceased, to be united in the nearest and dearest natural relation with one\* eminent for his love to the truth, and a reverential fear of a reconciled God, whose memory is precious, having, through grace, maintained an honorable profession near forty-seven years, full twenty-four of which he sustained the

\* The late Mr. Robert Munn. He was baptized November 28, 1720, and died the 19th of August 1767, aged 77 years. His relict, whose decease we now mourn, Mrs. Hannah Munn, was baptized on the 15th of June 1736. She died October 1, 1779, aged 83.



office of a deacon in this gospel church, with singular credit and usefulness. She, at length, being encouraged to be baptized into Christ, joined to the same community: with what uprightness, humility, and affection, she behaved in her place, you, my dear friends, who were eye-witnesses of her walk in the Lord, can testify.

In occasional intercourse with her, for many years, she appeared to me well established in the fundamental principles of the glorious gospel, on which her faith was built; with the word of which, few, if any, are more conversant: it dwelt richly in her, insomuch, that those about her know she was, on all occasions, so ready in the scripture as to be a kind of a living concordance; for the statutes of the Lord were her song in the house of her pilgrimage. She was careful to adorn the doctrine she confessed, not merely by her moral conduct, and filling her station in domestic life, in the relations of a wife, a mother, and a mistress, which she did with no small reputation, but her piety shone in an earnest concern for the spiritual and eternal welfare of her family. It is one criterion of a child of God to live at the throne of grace, where the deceased was found without ceasing; and there is reason, blessed be God, to conclude, that many fervent prayers, plentifully

plentifully watered with tears, have ascended from her heart and lips, with success, through the glorified High Priest of her profession, to whom she is gone, in behalf of her rising generation, and others under her more immediate inspection.

The greater part of the twelve years of her widowhood she rarely went abroad, and for several of the last of those years she was altogether confined in her house,\* during the whole of which she behaved with a truly Christian patience, and acquiescence in the will of her heavenly Father. In this period Providence afforded me repeated agreeable interviews, and one but a few weeks ago, when I found her as a person in whose heart Christ dwelt by faith, the hope of glory; she seemed delighting in the everlasting love of her reconciled God and Father, in Christ: the immutability of the divine counsel, the perfect

\* The submission of the deceased to the will of her covenant God, under a full persuasion that he performed, in every dispensation, the thing that was right, was truly amiable, and worthy imitation: not a murmuring word escaped her on the loss of her long dear partner in life; no, nor even in the most painful and threatening seasons of bodily disorder, in which sometimes nature seemed incapable of surviving the struggle; but she was ever advertising, with thankfulness, for her remaining comforts, and the mercies she enjoyed.

atonement



atonement of her Redeemer, and his surety-ship-righteousness, in which she trusted, as the sole ground of her pardon and justification in the sight of God; and, in a word, her prospect, by faith, of being soon transmittied, from a body almost worn out in the services of more than four score and three years, to the spirits of the just, and to Jesus, the glorious object of her full confidence, and supreme affection, with the hope of a better resurrection, were the joy of her heart. Under repeated strokes, that shook her animal frame, although incapable of speaking freely, her eye and her ear were avenues of comfort; she could hear the word, and join in prayer for her, and read with pleasure to the last, till the decree came forth; then, in an unsuspected moment, she suddenly departed; no sooner up and dressed, as usual, but the change was visible, and being hastened back to her chamber and bed, with an indulgent ease she almost instantly passed through the gate of natural death into life eternal. Thus our departed friend verified the prophecy of Moses, Psal. xc. 10. "The days of our years are three score years and ten; and, if by reason of strength, they be four score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow: for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."—She is now fled where, we trust, her separated soul is solaced in the bosom of her Lord.

On



On a review of this account, is there not, my dear hearers, an original of the picture we have been surveying? Who cannot discern a true, if not a striking, likeness?—A life extended far beyond the limits of man, employed in the service of God; in which the subject improved in spiritual understanding, and the habits of grace, and had been long desirous of entering into rest, must be allowed, at least in some degree, to answer to the description before us. May we not then, with soberness, apply the passage we have opened, to the dear saint now taken from us; and say, “She came to her grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in, in his season?” She was ripe, and ready for being gathered; lovely and joyful in her departure: now she is housed from all evil for ever, and is ascended to Jesus, till he comes, with ten thousands of his saints. Surely, the surviving relations and acquaintance of the deceased, may comfort one another with these words! It has been your honor, my dear friends, to attend so pious and venerable a parent and relation to the tomb; there, with the highest satisfaction, you may leave her remains, till the period of adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body, that purchased possession, when “the righteous shall shine forth, as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father.” Mat. xiii. 43.

Be concerned to follow her, as she followed Christ; so shall you unite in that glorious appearance, and never part more.

And now, beloved, who in this audience would not ascend as the Christian, when he departs out of the body, into the regions of bliss? Indeed, so stupid are some, in their carnal security, that they can speculate on others, as gone to heaven, and happy, without any due concern about their own future state; but I would suppose otherwise of you that are present. Do you wish to die the death of the righteous, and that your last end may be like his? Look into your state. The unregenerate shall not inherit the kingdom of God. No scornful unbeliever, no vicious libertine, no wanton professor, shall be exalted to this dignity, or taste this salvation of God. "The righteous hath hope in his death, but the wicked is driven away in his wickedness," as the chaff before the wind, Prov. xiv. 22. And this chaff, we are told, shall be burnt with unquenchable fire!—Think, my dear hearer, how dreadful it will be, if, instead of dying in faith, and ascending to the spirits of the just, being overtaken in a state of rebellion, thy naked soul should descend, from the tribunal of a righteous God, into the bottomless pit, whence there is no deliverance from avenging justice!

justice!—How astonishing and awful the case of a sinful mortal, treading on the borders of eternity, on any consideration, indifferent in what condition he shall enter the unknown and everlasting world, or how it shall be with him in that never-ending state! And, is this thy presumption? What, my friend, are the transitory pleasures of sin, or any thing in life, for the sake of which thou art, with the unwary multitude, neglecting thine eternal concerns, in competition with future happiness or misery, one or other of which will certainly be thy portion for ever! O then, be wise, and consider the alarming remonstrance of him who is now exalted to save or to destroy.—“What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Mark viii. 36, 37. But the penitent sinner, who walks humbly with his God, and is a follower after holiness, being released from this mortal frame, shall ascend to his mansion, and be an everlasting companion with the saints, and the Captain of their salvation, in glory.

In one word, happy the man, who has travelled through a long and dreary wilderness, trusting in God, having fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith; he comes to his  
grave



grave, aspiring to the joys of a separate state : he meets the enemy with a smiling, or rather triumphant countenance, knowing whom he has believed, and being persuaded of his victory through the Lord Jesus Christ : thus insured, he waits for that day, when the last trump shall sound, and the voice of the judge shall be heard, from the throne of his glory :——“ Gather my saints together unto me.”—For “ they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”



F I N I S.

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